

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An awl apparatus for penetrating bone, comprising:

 a shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, with a cutting edge formed on the distal end;

 an outer sleeve having a wall, a proximal end, and a distal end, wherein the outer sleeve surrounds at least a portion of the shaft, and is movable with respect to the shaft; and

 a biasing member configured to bias the shaft to an initial position within the outer sleeve;

 wherein the shaft is movable in the axial direction with respect to the outer sleeve by a predetermined distance to limit the depth of penetration of the cutting tip into a bone; [[and]]

 wherein the shaft can be rotated within the outer sleeve to aid in penetrating a bone;

[[and]]

 wherein the distal end of the outer sleeve is conically tapered for releasable attachment to a bone plate; and

wherein there is at least one aperture in the wall of the outer sleeve.

Claim 2 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 1, wherein the elastic member is a coil spring.

Claim 3 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 1, wherein the elastic member is a coil spring surrounding the shaft.

Claim 4 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the outer sleeve has external threads for releasable attachment to a bone plate.

Claim 5 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 1, wherein the initial position of the shaft is such that the cutting edge of the shaft is surrounded by the outer sleeve.

Claim 6 (Canceled)

Claim 7. The awl apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a shoulder for limiting depth of penetration into the bone by the cutting edge.

Claim 8 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a handle attached to the end of the shaft.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): An awl apparatus for penetrating bone, comprising:

 a shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, with a cutting edge formed on the distal end;

 an outer sleeve having a wall, a proximal end, and a distal end, wherein the outer sleeve surrounds at least a portion of the shaft, and is movable with respect to the shaft; and

 a biasing member configured to bias the shaft to an initial position within the outer sleeve;

 wherein the shaft is movable in the axial direction with respect to the outer sleeve by a predetermined distance to limit the depth of penetration of the cutting tip into a bone;

[[and]]

 wherein the shaft can be rotated within the outer sleeve to aid in penetrating a bone; and

 wherein there is at least one [[slot]] aperture in the wall of the outer sleeve.

Claim 10 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 9, wherein the elastic member is a coil spring.

Claim 11 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 9, wherein the elastic member is a coil spring surrounding the shaft.

Claim 12 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 9, wherein the distal end of the outer sleeve has external threads for releasable attachment to a bone plate.

Claim 13 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 9, wherein the initial position of the shaft is such that the cutting edge of the shaft is surrounded by the outer sleeve.

Claim 14 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 9, wherein the distal end of the outer sleeve is conically tapered for releasable attachment to a bone plate.

Claim 15 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a shoulder for limiting depth of penetration into the bone by the cutting edge.

Claim 16 (Original): The awl apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a handle attached to the end of the shaft.

Claims 17-20 (Canceled)